THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Congregation Visitation Customary

Revised January 2026

The Right Reverend Carrie Schofield-Broadbent

Bishop of Maryland

Basic Customary for Episcopal Visitations

- Caroline Bomgardner will be in contact a few weeks before the visitation to arrange an appointment with the rector/priest-in-charge-vicar-interim or senior warden. This in-person or Zoom meeting with the bishop is to discuss specific plans for the visitation and to check-in pastorally.

- Whenever possible, the bishop prefers **one combined service**, that allows for more time with the vestry, confirmands, and the congregation. We recognize there may be situations due to congregational size or circumstances when having one combined service may not be feasible. In those instances, clergy may consult with the bishop well in advance to discuss other options.

- **Before** the principal service, the bishop would like to have an informal meeting with the vestry/advisory board. This 30–45-minute meeting will be an opportunity to share information, hopes, and dreams about programs and ministries. Bishop Carrie would appreciate having paper, easel and markers available for this discussion. The parish clergy may choose to join this meeting. Please schedule this to also allow time for a brief visit and walk-through with candidates for confirmation, reception and/or reaffirmation before worship.

- Unless it's a patronal feast, the propers should be those appointed for the Sunday and taken from the *Revised Common Lectionary*. When there are choices, or if the bishop has a specific lesson request, that will be communicated in advance.

- The bishop is often accompanied by the archdeacon or a local deacon, who serves as her chaplain. They will normally read the Gospel lesson, help prepare the altar, and give the dismissal. Both the bishop and deacon may like to say a few words at the announcements.

- Bishop Carrie will take photographs during the service to share on her social media platforms. She invites members of the congregation to share photos, reflections, or a favorite moment from the service on social media. Bishop Carrie can be tagged on Facebook @bishopcarriesb, or Instagram @bishopcarriesb.

    - *Suggested bulletin announcement*:

    Bishop Carrie takes photographs before, during, and after worship services to share on her social media platforms. She invites you to post photos, reflections, or a favorite moment from today's service on social media. Be sure to check in and tag us on [social media platforms @ChurchHandle]. Bishop Carrie can be found on Facebook @bishopcarriesb and Instagram @bishopcarriesb. It's a way of spreading the Good News that God is at work in and through our worshipping communities. If anyone in the parish abstains from having their photo on social media, please alert the bishop.

- The bishop would like some time after the service to speak with the congregation and offer her thoughts and answer questions.

Further Instructions and Expectations

- The bishop will arrive at least 15 minutes before the first event.
- Bishop Carrie may prefer to vest separately and requests a few minutes of alone time before the start of the service.
- If there are confirmations, the bishop will stand at the altar rail, or wherever works best for the liturgical space and needs of confirmands.
- The bishop will preside for the entire service and prefers clergy of the church to stand together at the altar for the prayer of consecration.
- As to vestments, the bishop usually wears chasuble and miter. She has her own vestments, but let her know if you'd prefer her to wear the church's chasuble during the Holy Communion.
- Bishop Carrie would like to be consulted before patriotic songs are included in the service.
- Please send Bishop Carrie back with 2-3 extra bulletins.

Some Liturgical Preferences

- A chaplain/deacon precedes a bishop in procession and places the miter on the altar and the crozier in its stand at the appropriate time.
- If the service is a major feast of the church or major saint's day, the bishop prefers to have a general confession.
- If there is a baptism, the bishop prefers the clergy of the congregation to baptize with water, and the bishop will do the chrismation.
- There should be only one chalice on the altar at the consecration. The bishop prefers that ablutions are done after the service.
- The bishop prefers to use a lavabo, if available.
- The bishop is prepared to chant the parts of the service if that is the custom of the church.
- From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, the bishop does ***not*** want the Agnus Dei read or sung.
- Per the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, from Easter Vigil though the Day of Pentecost *"Alleluia, alleluia"* may be added to the dismissal.
- Confirmations/Receptions may take place during Lent and Advent.
- Please have your service book and books of records available for the bishop to see and sign.
- The loose plate offering should go towards the Bishop's Appeal from the congregation. You may send in a check with Bishop's Appeal on the memo line. Please do NOT give the bishop cash.